

2006 Noida serial murders

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| Surinder Koli | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Born | 1970 or 1971 |
| Other names | Subhash Koli, Surendra Koli, Surinder Koli, Satish |
| Criminal penalty | Life time imprisonment dated 28 January 2015 |
| Conviction(s) | Convicted Life time imprisonment dated 28 January 2015 |
| Killings | |
| Victims | 19+ |
| Span of killings | 8 February 2005–25 October 2006 |
| Country | India |
| State(s) | Uttar Pradesh |
| Date apprehended | 27 December 2006 |

The **Noida serial murders** (also **Nithari serial murders**, **Nithari Kand**) occurred in the house of businessman Moninder Singh Pandher in [Nithari, India](#) in 2005 and 2006. His servant Surinder Koli was convicted of the five murders and was sentenced to [death](#). Eleven murders remain officially unsolved pending further legal proceedings. Surinder Koli's death sentence was changed to a life sentence by the [Supreme Court](#) on 7 September 2014.^{[\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)}

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Events leading to primary investigation[\[edit\]](#)

In December 2006, two Nithari residents claimed they knew the location of the remains of children who had gone missing in the previous two years: the [municipal water](#) tank behind house D5. Both had daughters who were missing, and they suspected Surinder Koli, the domestic help at D5, had something to do with the disappearances. The residents claimed they had been repeatedly ignored by local authorities; therefore, they sought the help of former [Resident Welfare Association](#) (RWA) President S C Mishra. That morning, Mishra and the two residents searched the tank drain. One of the residents claimed to have found a decomposed hand, after which they called the police.^[4]

Anxious parents of the missing children rushed to Nithari with photographs. Koli, under the alias Satish, later confessed to killing six children and a 20-year-old woman known as "Payal" after [sexually assaulting](#) them.^[5]

The families of missing children accused the police of negligence. Initially, some Police officers including Noida SP city denied any criminal angle. They accused the parents for giving wrong information about their children's age. The police claimed that missing cases are not related to kids. The police said that they all were adults who left home after fighting with their parents. The residents alleged that the police were [corrupt](#) and were paid to conceal information. Demands were made for an independent probe into the matter. One of the residents asserted that the police were claiming credit for discovering the bodies when it was the residents who dug them up. The police denied having found fifteen bodies. They reiterated that they had discovered skulls, bones and other body parts, and said they were unable to give a figure for the number of victims. The victims' identities and number could only be established with [DNA tests](#). The police then sealed the house and did not allow news media anywhere near the site.^[5]

The [Central government](#) tried to ascertain the facts behind the discovery of the skeletal remains and whether it had "inter-state ramifications".^[6] Law and order are state matters, but the [Home Ministry](#) asked for details about the magnitude of the crime.^[6]

It was later revealed by the media that Koli's employer, Moninder Singh Pandher, was picked up by the police on 26 December and Koli on 27 December in connection with the disappearance of "Payal". After Koli's confession, the police claimed to have started digging up the nearby land area and discovered the children's bodies.^[7]

Two policemen were suspended on 31 December in connection with the serial murders as angry residents charged the house of the alleged mastermind. The policemen were suspended for dereliction of duty in the wake of the allegations by the locals that the police had refused to take any action when they were informed about a number of children missing.^[8]

The situation at Nithari was aggravated as a mob of villagers fought pitched battles with the police, both pelting stones at each other, just outside the residence of the accused. The police also detained a maid named Maya whom they suspected had a hand in procuring women for the businessman. As more body parts were dug up, near the premises, hundreds of local residents descended on the spot and alleged that there was an organ trade connection to the grisly killings of young children.^[5] A doctor living close to the Pandher residence, Navin Choudhary, had been under police suspicion a few years prior in connection with an alleged kidney racket at his hospital. Searches were conducted throughout the properties owned by him, and the investigators could not derive any information to support the claim.^[9]

Primary investigation[[edit](#)]

On 1 January 2007, the [remand](#) magistrate granted the police custody of the two until 10 January 2007, as the investigators said that further interrogation was required to complete the recovery of victims' remains. The court also granted permission for [Narco Analysis](#).^[10] On the same evening, police conducted a raid on Pandher's [Chandigarh](#) residence. His wife and son were interrogated about Pandher's habits. Police sources disclosed that their relationship with him was "strained", which was later found untrue. His behaviour was "normal". A senior police inspector revealed that there would be a series of searches conducted at Pandher's [Ludhiana](#) farmhouse and nearby places. The recent child kidnapping cases in Chandigarh - Pandher's hometown - were re-opened, but nothing was found.^{[11][12]}

The next day, 15 of the 17 skeletons discovered in the village were identified. Ten of them were identified by Koli when he was confronted with the photographs of the missing children. Five others were identified by family members after being shown belongings recovered from the scene.^[13] The [torsos](#) of the bodies were missing and the investigating team was looking into possibilities that the killings were motivated by illicit trade in human organs. The police said that there were at least 31 child victims.^[14]

Security was increased as police expected more disturbance, following two days of violence near Pandher's residence. In a press statement, [Chief Justice of India Y. K. Sabharwal](#) asserted that the investigation was at a preliminary level, and neither the courts nor the [Central Bureau of Investigation](#) (CBI) were involved at that point.^{[17][15]}

Inquiry committee report[[edit](#)]

The [Central Government](#), however, constituted a high-level inquiry committee to go into the police lapses, during the period of reporting and investigation. [Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Mulayam Singh Yadav](#) said that he would await the report of the committee looking into the issue before making the decision whether there should be a CBI probe into the matter. The committee was headed by the Joint Secretary, Women and Child Development Ministry, Manjula Krishnan. Under the terms of the reference,

- This committee would take stock of the efforts made by the Noida police in locating the children who went missing.
- It would assess the level of cooperation and assistance provided by the local administration, to locate the missing children and unite them with their families.
- It would go through the *modus operandi* and the motives of the accused.^{[12][16][17]}

The panel met the parents of the victims to record their statements even as the police determined that out of the 17 confirmed people killed, 10 were girls. Parents of eight of the sexually abused children were given compensation of Rs.12 lakhs. The DNA samples from the human remains were sent to a forensic laboratory in Hyderabad for the identification of the victims while forensic samples were sent to the laboratory in Agra for determining the age, cause of death and other details. It was determined that Payal was the only victim identified as adult in this case, with all other 11 victims below the age of 10.^[18] Seven of the eight families that had been provided compensation of Rs. 200,000 on 3 January 2007 returned their cheques in protest. However, the cheques were soon returned to them. They demanded houses and jobs in compensation as well.^[12]

After reeling under a lot of relentless pressure and public outcry, the Uttar Pradesh Government suspended two superintendents of police and dismissed six policemen for dereliction of duty. This action followed the report by the four-member committee.^{[19][20]} On 17 January 2007 the inquiry committee submitted its reports indicting the Uttar Pradesh police for "gross negligence" in handling the cases of missing persons. The committee said that the local administration was negligent and irresponsible while dealing with the missing persons reports and did not rule out organ trade as a possible motive behind the killings.^[21]

The two accused in the case were already in police custody while the skeletal remains of the young children were being unearthed from behind and in front of Pandher's residence. An FIR had been filed on 7 October 2006. Investigations revealed that Payal's cellphone was being used although the SIM card she owned remained inactive. Through digital surveillance, the investigators were able to track down a number of people and could finally reach the man who sold the phone. The rickshaw cart puller affirmed that the phone belonged to someone from the Pandher residence. After the affirmation of the facts by the witness, Moninder Singh was called for interrogation, which subsequently revealed nothing. His aide and servant, Surender Koli was picked up the next day and he confessed killing the woman and dumping her body behind the house. The police started digging and henceforth recovered the skeletal remains of the missing children instead of Payal.^[7]

Nand Lal, the father of the girl – Deepika alias Payal, alleged that the police had threatened and harassed him. He stated that it was because of the court intervention that the police officers registered the FIR.

Suspicious of child pornography racket[edit]

The investigating teams seized erotic literature along with a laptop computer connected to a webcam, which immediately raised the apprehensions of the presence of an international child pornography racket. The police also recovered some photographs of Pandher with nude children and foreigners during his four international visits, which was later discovered to be untrue. It was alleged that Pandher supplied such pictures abroad and could link him to paedophilia. Later during the investigation it was found the nude children in the

pictures were Pandher's grandchildren. There was no link found to child pornography. The laptop and the webcam were later returned to the family, and the story was classified as a media created rumour.^[citation needed]

Suspensions of organ trade and cannibalism^[edit]

The police initially suspected an organ trade angle as to the motive behind the murders and raided the house of a doctor who lived in the neighbourhood of the primary accused. A team of officials, accompanied by a team of forensic experts, went to pick up possible evidence for tests. The police revealed that the doctor had been accused of a similar crime in 1998, although the court had absolved him the same year. There was a second raid a few days later.^[22] The police were, however, cautious with the news reports suggesting the accused committed **cannibalism** even before the **polygraph** tests had barely begun. They were "aghast" when they learned of media reports that one of the accused had confessed to the consumption of the victims' livers and other body parts. Such a possibility was not ruled out by the investigating team, considering the amount of brutality the duo had allegedly committed on the victims.^[23]

Brain mapping and narco analysis^[edit]

The accused duo were brought to the Directorate of Forensic Sciences in **Gandhinagar** city in order to undergo **brain mapping** and **polygraph** tests on 4 January 2007^[24] and **narco analysis** five days later.^[25] The police director told the scribes that both the accused had been cooperative during the tests and examinations. A senior director of the institute announced the conclusion of the extensive tests and declared that a conclusion had been drawn. Surrender Koli had confessed to the crimes and had given his employer a clean chit saying that he was unaware of Koli's doings. Surrender Koli also revealed that all deaths had taken place through strangulation. He would then rape them before taking the bodies to his personal washroom and dismembering them. Pandher was declared to be a womaniser and depressed.

CBI investigation^[edit]

After four days of discourse and mounting pressure from the **Government of India**, the **Uttar Pradesh Government** decided to hand over the inquiry to the Central Bureau of Investigation. The notification came after the Department of Personnel and Training, which governs the CBI, sent a letter to the state government making a proper request for a probe by the agency in line with the prescribed norms.^{[26][27]}

The two accused were taken to the CBI headquarters in New Delhi on the night of 11 January 2007, a day before the investigation was to be transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation.^[28] The CBI continued its investigation and discovered three more skulls and human remains at the site of the serial killings. The investigators searched the drains outside the house and found three skulls, believed to be of the children and several body parts, including parts of legs, bones, and torso. Several objects were found that are believed to belong to the victims. The exhibits were sealed and forwarded to forensic labs.^[29]^[30]

The Central inquiry committee that investigated the serial killings discovered serious lapses on the part of the police in handling the cases of missing persons. The reports were incriminating and proclaimed that the local police failed in their duty to respond to complaints over the past two years.^{[31][32]} The discovery of several **polythene** bags containing parts of human torsos led the investigators to conclude that it was unlikely that the accused had links to

illegal organ trade. The CBI team discovered the bags in the drains outside the Pandher residence. After interrogating Surender Koli, they came to a *prima facie* conclusion that "he is a [psychopath](#) used to carry out the killings". Interrogators also said that it was possible that Pandher had no role to play in the murders.^[33] The seized materials were sent to laboratory for post-mortem, individualisation, and DNA extraction. The materials received from the Uttar Pradesh police were also forwarded for forensic examination. Some liquor bottles, a [double-barreled gun](#), cartridges, mobile phones, photographs, photo albums and a blood-stained grill were handed over to the CBI for extensive examination.^[34] Preliminary investigations revealed that the bones were not more than two years old. The CBI also revealed that only fifteen skulls had been found thus far, and not seventeen as claimed by the state police.^[35] A three-member CBI team questioned the kin of Surender Koli in the [Almora district](#).^[36] In November 2007, the Supreme Court notified the CBI concerning the case about the allegation by a relative of a victim that the investigating agency was trying to shield Moninder Singh Pandher, one of the key accused in the case.

Victims^{[[edit](#)]}

Payal was the only adult victim in the string of serial murders. Young girls constituted the majority of victims. [Post-mortem](#) reports of the 17 sets of skulls and bones recovered showed that 11 of the killed were girls. Doctors at Noida Government Hospital revealed that there was a "butcher-like precision" in the chopping of the bodies.^[37] The post mortem reports revealed that there had been a pattern in the killings.^[38] A gory revelation was made by the [AIIMS](#) on 6 February 2007. It was also concluded that there were 19 skulls in all, 16 complete and 3 damaged. The bodies had been cut into three pieces before being disposed of by the servant. The CBI sources said that the manservant, after strangling the victims, severed their heads and threw them in the drain behind the house of his employer. Sources also revealed that he used to keep the [viscera](#) in a polythene bag before disposing it off in a drain, so as to prevent detection. The skulls and the other remains were forwarded to the [Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics, Hyderabad](#) for further profiling.^[39] The crime scene examination, recovery and collection of human remains and exhibits and their detailed examination was carried out by experts from AIIMS and CFSL under the chairmanship and guidance of professor [T D Dogra](#).^[40] decision of the court On 12 February 2009, both the accused—Moninder Singh Pandher and his domestic servant Surinder Koli—were found guilty of the 8 February 2005 murder of Rimpa Haldar, 14, by a special sessions court in [Ghaziabad](#). This verdict left the [Central Bureau of Investigation](#) (CBI) red faced, as the CBI had earlier given a clean chit to Moninder Singh Pandher in all its chargesheets. Both the accused Moninder Singh Pandher and Surender Koli were given the [death sentence](#) on 13 February 2009, as the case was classified as "rarest of rare". On 4 May 2010, Koli was found guilty of the 25 October 2006 murder of Arti Prasad, 7, and given a second death sentence eight days later. On 27 September 2010, Koli was found guilty of the 10 April 2006 murder of Rachna Lal, 9, and given a third death sentence the following day. On 22 December 2010, Koli was found guilty of the June 2006 murder of Deepali Sarkar, 12, and given a fourth death sentence.^{[41][42]} On 15 February 2011, the Supreme Court upheld the death sentence of Surender Koli.^[41] On 24 December 2012, Koli was found guilty of the 4 June 2005 murder of Chhoti Kavita, 5, and given a fifth death sentence.^[43] In February 2011, the [Supreme Court of India](#)

upheld their death sentence. In July 2014, the [President of India](#) rejected the mercy petitions filed by 6 convicts.^[44] On 3 September 2014, the Court issued a death warrant against Koli in Nithari case. On the evening of 4 September 2014 Surender Koli was transferred to [Meerut](#) Jail because of the absence of hanging facilities at Dasna Jail, Ghaziabad. He was to be hanged on 12 September 2014. The Supreme Court of India stayed the death sentence for one week after a petition was filed for same. On 29 October 2014, the Supreme Court bench headed by the Chief Justice of India H. L. Dattu rejected the death sentence review petition stating that the court had not committed any error in judgement.^[45] On 28 January 2015, the High Court bench headed by Chief Justice D. Y. Chandrachud and Justice P. K. S. Baghel commuted the death sentence of Surender Koli to life imprisonment on the ground of "inordinate delay" in deciding his mercy petition.^[46]

Acquittal^{[[edit](#)]}

On 10 September 2009, the Allahabad high court acquitted Moninder Singh Pandher and overturned his death sentence.^[47] He was not named a main suspect by investigators initially, but was summoned as co-accused during the trial. Pandher faces trial in five cases out of the remaining 12, and could be re-sentenced to death if found guilty in any of those killings. The same day Pandher was acquitted, the Allahabad high court upheld the death sentence for Surender Koli, the former domestic servant of Pandher.^[47]

See also^{[[edit](#)]}

- [List of serial killers by country#India](#)

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External links^{[[edit](#)]}

- [Serial Killings in Noida and Ipswich](#)
- [Panel to probe Noida serial killings](#)
- [BBC News - Tests on India killings accused](#)
- [NDTV- Noida Serial Murder](#)
- [Rediff.com - Noida serial killings - Full coverage](#)
- [Sify.com - Noida killings - Full coverage](#)
- [Indianexpress.com - Noida killings - Full coverage](#)
- [Women's groups oppose death for Koli 28 November 2014; Thehindu.com](#)